# THE CHESTER PLAN

Adopted By The Chesterfield County Board of Supervisors July 27, 2005

This plan replaces the Chester Village Plan, first adopted by the Chesterfield County Board of Supervisors on September 13, 1989.

Prepared by the Chesterfield County Planning Department P. O. Box 40 Chesterfield, VA 23832 804/748-1055 www.chesterfield.gov/plan

Reformatted October 2006

#### I. Introduction

# **Study Area Boundaries**

The boundary of the *Chester Plan* study area includes the geography of the *Chester Village Plan* (1989). Generally, to the north, Route 288 is the boundary; to the east, Jefferson Davis Highway; Happy Hill and Baldwin Roads to the south; Branders Bridge Road to the southwest; and Chalkley, Centralia, and Hopkins Roads to the northwest. Changes from the 1989 geography include: the addition of the Carver Heights neighborhood and the neighborhood centered in the historic Centralia area around Old Lane and Hopkins Road. The plan area is approximately 10.5 square miles, comprising about two percent of the land area of the county.

#### **Magisterial District**

The *plan* study area is almost entirely contained within the Bermuda Magisterial District, with a small portion of the *plan* area (north of Centralia Road) located in the Dale Magisterial District.

# **How this Plan Works**

The Chester Plan amendment, once adopted by the Board of Supervisors, will become part of The Plan for Chesterfield, the county's comprehensive plan. The Plan for Chesterfield is used by county citizens, staff, the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors as a guide for future decisions affecting Chesterfield County including, but not limited to decisions regarding future land use, transportation networks and zoning actions. Once the Chester Plan is adopted, it will replace the existing Chester Village Plan (adopted in 1989) and two

small areas of the *Central Area Plan* (adopted in 1997).

# Staff Analysis

The Planning Department, in conjunction with other county departments, assessed existing conditions within the Chester area and performed an analysis of land use and public facilities needs and trends in the area. The results were summarized and shared with public officials and interested citizens. These assessments and analyses, along with citizen input, form the basis for the goals and recommendations of the plan. The complete text of the analyses performed are available from the Planning Department.

# **Citizen Participation**

Planning Department staff, together with representatives from other county departments, maintained close contact with the community organizations that serve Chester and over the course of the plan process, over 20 meetings were held with citizens. Citizens shared their concerns and ideas with staff, and offered their input to the vision, goals, recommendations and land use for the area.

# II. A Plan for Action

The Chester Plan should guide future development in ways that provide balanced benefits to the community, property owners, existing citizens and future citizens. The land use plan makes no attempt to determine the current or short-term marketability of any one parcel for any particular land use. Rather, it attempts to anticipate future needs for broad categories of uses throughout the study area for the next 20 years. The plan does not rezone land, but may suggest Ordinance amendments and other actions. Finally, the plan suggests the proper relationship between differing land uses within the community.

To provide this guidance, and allow citizens to anticipate the nature of future development, the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission have incorporated guidelines into plan amendments through goals and recommendations.

#### Vision

A group of Chester citizens met on March 2, 2004 with Planning Department staff to discuss their vision for the future of Chester. The vision statement is broad in nature and describes the

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community's idea of what Chester would be like if it was perfect. Vision statements are not meant to be achievable or practical; rather, they are meant to provide a mental picture of what could be. This mental picture assists the community in deciding what projects or actions are worthwhile. The implementation of a vision statement occurs over time and through the actions of many people and organizations. The inclusion of the vision statement in the plan is meant to guide and inform readers about what the community hopes for the future; it is not meant to imply that the plan can achieve these outcomes. The plan is only one small part of the community's future.

Chester is a healthy, walkable community with a charming, identifiable core where residents and visitors are drawn to the including a amenities found there, magnificent, well used library and community arts center. The historic villages of Chester and Centralia are preserved and enhanced and attract residents and visitors. There is a thriving and friendly small business community with all buildings occupied in the village. People can walk from home to the village center, along tree-lined streets, their completed linear park, or to the many pocket and community parks in the area. The neighborhoods are well organized, connected to the pedestrian network, and participate actively in community evens and organizing block parties. There is well-maintained, efficiently planned high transportation network excellent roads, includes alternative transportation to Richmond, and a highspeed rail access in the village.

## **Goals and Recommendations**

#### **Chester Plan Area**

The Introduction to the *Plan for Chesterfield* encourages the shaping of Chesterfield's communities by molding development into well designed and attractive communities of special character. To this end, the Introduction suggests that functionally and visually distinctive communities and historic villages, such as Chester, together with the surrounding natural resources and community character, should be preserved. Village character can be achieved through the provision of village type streetscape improvements, including sidewalks, streetlights and street trees. It also includes compatible architecture and mixed-use development in the village center. To these ends, the Land Use Plan and Goals and Recommendations of *The* 

Chester Plan are designed to encourage village type and scale development within the village center, with decreasing densities of residential development as one moves further from the center of the village. Design standards for the Route 10 corridor and plan wide recommendations for a pedestrian network are also part of the strategy to maintain Chester's special sense of community.

The Goals and Recommendations that best apply to the *Chester Plan* study area are:

**Goal 1:** Ensure that new residential proposals are representative of, and compatible with, existing and anticipated area residential development.

Actions that stabilize and improve the health of existing neighborhoods forestall decline and blight and contribute to the overall health of the larger community.

#### Recommendations

- A. Continue to use the plan and the zoning process to encourage new residential zoning with sole access through an existing or planned subdivision to meet or exceed the average lot size of, and have a density equal to or less than, the existing subdivision.
- B. Additional multi-family development in the Chester Plan area is not encouraged outside of the Neighborhood Mixed Use area. There are a variety of housing types and an adequate supply of affordable housing in the overall community, and additional development in transitional areas (designated for office-residential mixed use) should be focused on single-family residential of up to four units to the acres, duplexes and age restricted developments such as zero-lot line homes or townhouses.
- C. Develop a countywide program to explore criteria and methods for voluntary downzonings in areas currently zoned for R-7 and R-9 uses. The program would look at appropriate locations, land use plan designations, the availability of utilities and aggregation of properties to create larger areas of less dense zoning, as opposed to a patchwork quilt of zoning categories in a particular area. As appropriate criteria are determined, property owners could be contacted by the county to determine interest in a county initiated down-zoning. All down-zonings would be voluntary. As a pilot project for the program, three property owners in the Centralia area have

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expressed interest in down-zoning their property.

Residential developments of varying densities and lot sizes encourage variety in residential areas and offer county citizens a choice of neighborhoods, living environments and lifestyles.

#### **Limitations and Opportunities**

New subdivisions developing within the study area increase the availability of housing in this part of the county. However, such residential development should be designed to protect existing neighborhoods and enhance the larger community, especially where there is an existing development pattern that is less dense than the allowed density of the new subdivision. The county has limited statutory ability to demand less dense development in these locations.

**Goal 2:** Protect and preserve historic and cultural resources.

Several sites and structures within the study area have historic or cultural significance. Chester retains 60 structures catalogued by Jeffrey O'Dell, in his book, *Chesterfield County: Early Architecture and Historic Sites* (1983). There are also many other historic structures that should also be noted and retained.

In Chesterfield County, there are currently 39 historic landmarks that have been designated through the county's Historic Districts and Landmarks Ordinance. Eleven of these designated landmarks are in the *Chester Plan* area. The Ordinance provides regulatory protection to a structure by providing review of alterations. Addition to the list is voluntary, and is managed by the Preservation Committee.

### Recommendation

A. Encourage the preservation of identified historic structures in the Chester area by allowing adaptive reuse that is compatible existing and anticipated development. Specifically, historic structures may be appropriate for light commercial uses if the property owner is retaining the structure, is willing to have it designated as a Chesterfield County historic landmark, and impacts of development on the surrounding properties. Due to the rural residential nature of the Centralia community, adaptive reuse of structures in the Centralia community west of the railroad tracks is not appropriate.

The Introduction to the *Plan For Chesterfield* encourages the identification and preservation of lands, sites and structures that have archeological and/or historic significance. To this end, comprehensive plan amendments attempt to identify structures and sites within study area boundaries that have historic or cultural significance. Protection of such structures and sites offer the best opportunities for presenting and interpreting the county's historic and cultural heritage.

#### **Limitations and Opportunities**

Chester was founded by Charles Stebbins and Joseph Snead, who platted the streets and lots for the village in the mid 1850's at the intersection of two railroads. The streets drawn by Stebbins and Snead are: Petersburg, Winfree, Richmond and Percival streets, running approximately eastwest. The cross streets are: Dodomeade, Gill, Curtis, West, Snead, Stebbins, and Daniel. The village had convenient railroad access, easy road access to the Petersburg-Richmond Turnpike, and bordered current Route 10, which was, even then, a major thoroughfare.

The study area also includes the historic settlement of Centralia. Centralia was a train stop on the line from Richmond, and was a busy neighborhood when regular train service was available. It has several historic homes still existing today, and the benefit of the existing setting, which retains its sense of history.

Many of the early homes of Chester are still in place today, and there has been increased interest in the last several years in rehabilitating these historic homes.

\*- The source for the historic summary is Chesterfield County, Early Architecture and Historic Sites, by Jeffrey O'Dell.

**Goal 3:** Create a network of safe and pleasant biking and walking routes throughout the community.

Numerous customer contacts made through the customer service process have emphasized the value of a community connected by a pedestrian network. While citizens recognize that this is a long term goal that will be achieved through a focused effort, the Chester Plan seeks to provide the guide for the future network. The Land Use Plan map recommends comprehensive pedestrian network, which would be made up of both trails and sidewalks. Where there was interest and consensus on the value of a pedestrian network connection, the segment is shown on the map. No evaluations were made as to the practical or physical limitations of any particular connection.

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Therefore, not every connection will occur. The map is intended to provide guidance for where a pedestrian network should be pursued.

#### Recommendations

- A. Adopt an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance requiring the development of trails and sidewalks with new development in areas with designated pedestrian network corridors where appropriate and as shown on the land use plan map.
- B. For future road construction projects, including upgrades and expansions, on roads designated to include a pedestrian network, addition to the pedestrian network should be included as part of the project where practical and supported by the community and those property owners most affected.
- C. When new sidewalks are constructed in the area, where space allows, a planting strip of street trees should separate the sidewalk from the street.
- Enhanced crosswalks for Chester should be provided. Based on citizen comments, some of the locations that are priorities for improvements are: at intersections along Route 10, near schools and parks, and at intersections of arterial and collector roads. Crosswalks should be designed as visual enhancements, alerting drivers to pedestrian use in these locations. Consider enhancing crosswalks additional signage; pavement markings; and brick pavers, stamped concrete, stamped asphalt, or other such material. Crosswalk improvements within public rights of way must be designed and constructed to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) standards.

#### **Limitations and Opportunities**

One limitation, as true for most construction projects, to the development of a pedestrian network in the Chester Plan area is financial. Implementation of a pedestrian network could be provided through development and/or public road projects. Citizen action will be necessary if the pedestrian network is to be implemented. Some citizen actions that could assist in the development of the network are: grant writing, education, or seeking property donations. Other limitations to the development of new trails and sidewalks could include the provision of right of way, particularly in areas that are already developed, and various concerns of adjacent property owners. While a pedestrian network is broadly supported in concept, there may be

areas that are shown for improvement where a sidewalk or trail may not be desired based on more detailed information.

The pedestrian network is anticipated to be comprised of a combination of sidewalks and trails. Generally, trails are better suited to locations adjacent to creeks or located in Resource Protection Areas. Sidewalks are better suited to locations along roadways.

**Goal 4**: Ensure that office and commercial development and redevelopment within the Route 10 corridor and the Neighborhood Mixed Use area promote and enhance the visual appeal of the community.

Citizens participated in a visual preference survey as part of the plan process. The results of the survey confirmed their interest and commitment to a village or town style streetscape and traditional architectural styles, particularly Arts and Crafts, Federal, Georgian, and Colonial Revival styles. In many areas, particularly the area designated on the plan for Neighborhood Mixed Use, the Route 10 corridor and the Chester Road corridor, citizens were particularly concerned about the architectural appearance of new development redevelopment, and its transition to existing residential areas.

#### Recommendations

- A. Adopt design guidelines for future development along the Route 10 corridor from Route 1 to Chalkley Road. The design guidelines should replace and simplify the existing ordinances for the area, allowing flexibility where needed and improving architectural standards.
- B. Utilize the new design standards to maintain a distinctive edge between the village core area and the outskirts of the village. Higher densities and scales, along with reduced setbacks, should be limited to the area along Route 10 bounded by Womack and Osborne Roads. Existing standards for the area east of Osborne Road address density and scale issues for that area. Standards for the area west of Womack Road should be based upon the county Emerging Growth standards, with additional architectural standards.
- C. While the plan map is parcel specific and makes recommendations regarding transitions between commercial, office and residential land uses, there may be parcels directly adjacent to these transitions that would be appropriate for the adjacent land

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use. Non-residential land development that includes land designated on the plan for residential uses that are immediately adjacent to land designated for non-residential uses may be appropriate under certain circumstances. These include: adjacent lots are combined to create better transitions to adjacent residential land uses, access is limited to the parcel designated for non-residential uses on the comprehensive plan, and topographical features or natural breaks are used for transitions.

# **Limitations and Opportunities**

Existing zoning and land use patterns within the study area reflect a mix of office and residential zoning and land uses, with some commercial uses and several public/semi-public uses along Route 10. Opportunities exist to preserve and enhance the existing function and visual appeal of Route 10 and the village commercial area as the center and focus for social activity and community identity within Chester.

**Goal 5:** Adopt an ordinance requiring the use of the public water and wastewater systems.

#### Recommendation

A. Amend the Subdivision and Utilities Ordinances to require mandatory connection to the public water and wastewater systems except for large lot residential development.

#### **Limitations and Opportunities**

The Chester Plan area has adequate water and wastewater facilities to serve existing and future development. So that future development and redevelopment are orderly and predictable the plan recommends that new development be served by the public water and wastewater systems. Subsequently, the Subdivision and Utilities Ordinances will be amended to require use of the public water and wastewater systems.

**Goal 6:** Provide a safe, efficient and cost effective transportation system.

The County *Thoroughfare Plan*, which was originally adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1989, identifies right-of-way classifications of existing roads, and right-of-way classifications and general alignments of future roads. As development occurs inside the *Chester Plan* area, in other areas of the County, and in the region, road improvements will be needed in this area to accommodate increasing traffic volumes and reduce congestion.

#### Recommendations

- A. Adopt the *Thoroughfare Plan* as shown, including: (1) the reduction of West Hundred Road from a 90 foot wide Major Arterial to a 70 foot wide Collector between Branders Bridge Road and Route 10; (2) the deletion of the proposed Collector from Centralia Road south to the proposed North/South Arterial that is within the County-owned 100 foot wide right-of-way along the old Seaboard Coast Line railroad; and, (3) the deletion of the proposed Major Arterial ("Hopkins Road Realigned") from just south of the Route 288 overpass to Chester Road across from Hamlin Creek Parkway.
- B. Use the zoning and development review processes to encourage development proposals to conform to the *Thoroughfare Plan* with respect to the construction of road improvements and the dedication of rights-of-way.
- C. Use the zoning and development review process to encourage development proposals to include mitigation of their traffic impacts by providing road improvements and controlling the number of direct accesses to major arterial and collector roads.
- D. As improvements are provided on roads identified in the County's Bikeway Plan, consider incorporating bicycle facilities.

## **Limitations and Opportunities**

In the *Chester Plan* area, existing development limits the opportunities to plan for additional new roads. The limited potential for new roads in this area of the county will make it necessary for existing roads to carry the majority of the traffic generated by future development. Without improvements, these roadways will become congested.

The current Six-Year Improvement Program includes three road improvement projects within the *Chester Plan* area:

- Branders Bridge Road shoulder improvements, from Carver Heights Drive to Bradley Bridge Road (scheduled for Spring 2007);
- Chalkley Road improve the curve south of Centralia Road, between

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Gravel Neck Road and Inge Wood Circle (scheduled for Spring 2006); and,

 Hopkins Road – improve sight distance in the curve west of Old Lane (scheduled for Spring 2005).

Staff recommends that two new roadway facilities remain on the *Thoroughfare Plan* in the *Chester Plan* area:

- North/South Collector this roadway would provide a new connection between Route 10 and Ecoff Avenue. This road is anticipated to be constructed in conjunction with future development. It is recommended to have a right-of-way width of 70 feet.
- North/South Arterial In the early 1980's, the County acquired from the then Seaboard Coast Line Railroad a right-of-way, approximately 100 feet in width, from Chester Road to Branders Bridge Road. The alignment of this North/South Arterial falls within the abandoned railroad right-of-way. It is unlikely that this roadway will be completed in conjunction with future development. Public funds will have to be provided for its completion. Note: The land use plan identifies a pedestrian network adjacent to this right of way. The pedestrian facility could be provided as sidewalks along the road or as a trail outside of the 100-foot wide right of way.

If the Chester area was to "build-out" in accordance with the land use recommendations of the existing 1989 *Chester Village Plan*, another 4,345 residential units (single family, apartments, and townhouses) and 786,750 additional square feet of commercial and office development could result. This future development could add approximately 55,425 vehicle trips to area roads each day.

The recommendations of this draft plan could result in 715 fewer residential units, and 12,610 more square feet of commercial and office development at "build-out". This level of development could result in approximately 4,900 fewer vehicle trips each day than "build-out" under the current plan.

The County's *Bikeway Plan* was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1989. The purpose of the *Bikeway Plan* is "to designate a coordinated system of bike facilities to connect County and State parks with other high bike traffic generators such as schools." In the *Chester Plan* area, Route 10, Osborne Road, Branders Bridge Road, and Happy Hill Road are designated in the *Bikeway Plan* as part of the "bikeway network". In accordance with the

Bikeway Plan, staff will consider including bike facilities along these roads in conjunction with future road improvements.

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT) has High Speed Rail environmental studies underway that may effect the Chester Plan area. The South East High Speed Rail would utilize a corridor connecting Washington, DC to Charlotte, North Carolina via Richmond. The South Hampton Roads High Speed Rail would utilize a High Speed Rail corridor connecting Richmond and South Hampton Roads. Possible routes for these corridors are the existing or abandoned CSX rail line through Chester. A final decision will be made upon completion of the Tier II study. The Board has taken a position opposing the use of the abandoned rail line. The county continues to work with the VDRPT on the specifics of the rail corridor through Chesterfield County.

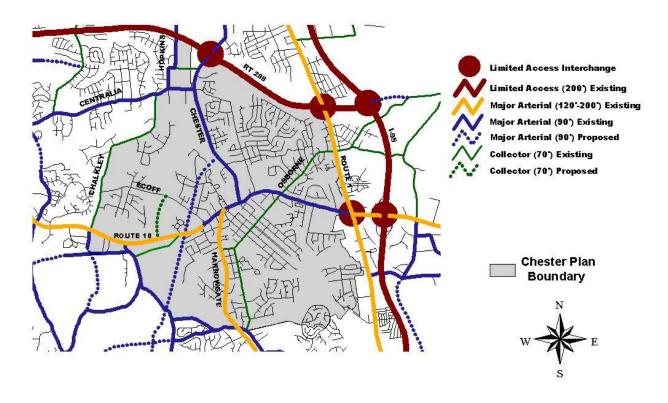
Staff will continue to evaluate development proposals and recommend that mitigating road improvements are provided that will address their traffic impacts. The improvements may include the construction of new roads, right-of-way dedications, pavement widening and construction of turn lanes, horizontal and vertical alignment improvements, control of access, and ditch relocation to provide adequate shoulders.

The eastern part of the plan is within the Jefferson Davis Highway Enterprise Zone. Based on the Board of Supervisors policy regarding development within the Enterprise Zone, road improvements are not required by the county. Road improvements may be required by the Virginia Department of Transportation.

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# **Thoroughfare Plan**

# **Proposed Thoroughfare Plan**

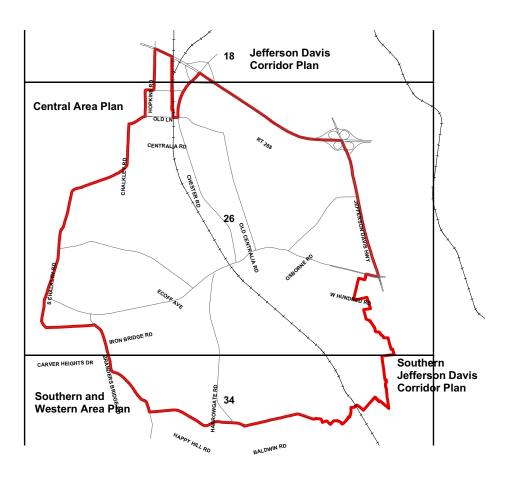


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#### The Chester Plan

In 2006, Chesterfield County Planning Department consolidated all individual land use plan maps in the *Plan For Chesterfield* into the county's Geographic Information System (GIS). The land use plan for The Chester Plan is now published in two forms: 1) as part of a countywide land use plan map, and 2) on land use plan grid map numbers 18,26,34.

The recommended land use category definitions for the land use plan and the notes associated with the plan follows this page



Copies of the Plan For Chesterfield countywide land use plan map and each of its more detailed 46 grid maps are available through the following sources:

- On the Chesterfield County Planning Department CD. This CD is included with paper copies of The Plan for Chesterfield, and also available separately from the Chesterfield County Planning Department.
- On Internet at http://www.chesterfield.gov/plan.

Questions Concerning the Plan For Chesterfield and its related land use plans should be directed to the Chesterfield County Planning Department at 804/748-1050 or planning@chesterfield.gov.

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# Chester Plan Land Use Categories

Residential (1 dwelling per acre or less)
Residential (1.5 dwelling per acre or less)
Residential (2.5 dwellings per acre or less)
Residential (7.0 dwellings per acre or more)
Residences, and places of worship, schools,
parks and other similar public and semi-public facilities.

Note: In this category, new multi-family development (including apartments, townhouses, as well as individual buildings with multiple units) is not appropriate.

Conservation/Recreation: Under circumstances that ensure compatibility with existing and/or anticipated area residential development, publicly owned land or land held in public or private trust for the purpose of preserving and promoting its natural function, character and/or historic significance (such as floodplains, wildlife habitat, open space, conservation areas, historic sites, etc.). Public access for recreational purposes may also be appropriate. Generally such areas should follow the line of the resource protection area, or extend 300 feet landward from the edge of a stream or river, whichever is the greater distance. Should such land be transferred to private ownership or other uses. the appropriate uses would be those that are compatible with surrounding existing anticipated development, as reflected by existing land uses, zoning, and/or the recommended land uses on the adopted plan.

**Public:** Publicly owned properties (county, state and federal), including schools, parks, cemeteries and other public facilities, as well as underutilized or vacant land. Should such land be redeveloped for other uses, the appropriate uses would be those that are compatible with surrounding existing or anticipated development, as reflected by existing land uses, zoning, and/or the recommended land uses on the adopted plan.

Note: In this category, new multi-family development (including apartments, townhouses, as well as individual buildings with multiple units) is not appropriate. Residential development should be comprised of single family homes of densities up to four units to the acre, duplexes, or age restricted developments such as townhouses or zero lot line homes if designed to look like single family homes.

Neighborhood Mixed Use: A mix of neighborhood scale retail and service, professional and administrative offices, along with residential developments of varying densities. Neighborhood-scale retail and service uses that serve primarily office and residential developments would be appropriate when part of a mixed use development of aggregated acreage under a unified plan of development and when located with access to intersecting transportation corridors. R-MF, R-TH, O-2, C-2

Note: Development in this area should be designed and modeled on the scale, architecture, and pattern of development of a traditional village center or small community downtown. Higher densities than currently exist are not precluded, but should be designed to add to the village feel and appearance. Parking should be consolidated within projects and located to the rear of the development, locating buildings closer to the roadway to facilitate the 'downtown' appearance of development. Encouraged architectural styles are Arts and Crafts, Federal, Georgian, and Colonial Revival.

Office/Residential Mixed Use: Professional and administrative offices, along with residential developments of varying densities. Supporting retail and service uses would be appropriate when part of a mixed use center of aggregated acreage under a unified plan of development and when located with access to intersecting transportation corridors. R (various), O-2

Note: In this category, new multi-family development (including apartments, townhouses, as well as individual buildings with multiple units) is not appropriate. Residential development should be comprised of single family homes of densities up to four units to the acre, duplexes, or age restricted developments such as townhouses or zero lot line homes if designed to look like single family homes.

Community Mixed Use: Community scale commercial uses, including shopping centers, service and office uses that serve community wide trade areas. Residential uses of various types and densities may be appropriate if part of a larger mixed use project and the design is integrated with other uses. C-3

Note: In this category, new multi-family development (including apartments, townhouses, as well as individual buildings with multiple units) is not appropriate.

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Residential development should be comprised of single-family homes of densities up to four units to the acre, duplexes, or age restricted developments such as townhouses or zero lot line homes if designed to look like single-family homes.

**Commercial:** General commercial uses, including automobile oriented uses and light industrial uses. Residential uses of various types and densities may be appropriate if part of a larger mixed use project. C-5

Note: In this category, new multi-family development (including apartments, townhouses, as well as individual buildings with multiple units) is not appropriate. Residential development should be comprised of single-family homes of densities up to four units to the acre, duplexes, or age restricted developments such as townhouses or zero lot line homes if designed to look like single-family homes.

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# The Chester Plan

# **Map Note**

# Note 1:

More intense residential uses such as age restricted townhouses and zero-lot line developments may be appropriate in this location if sufficient size and shape of property is aggregated to ensure a quality development with appropriate transition from the existing commercial to the adjacent single-family neighborhood and adequate access is provided.

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